

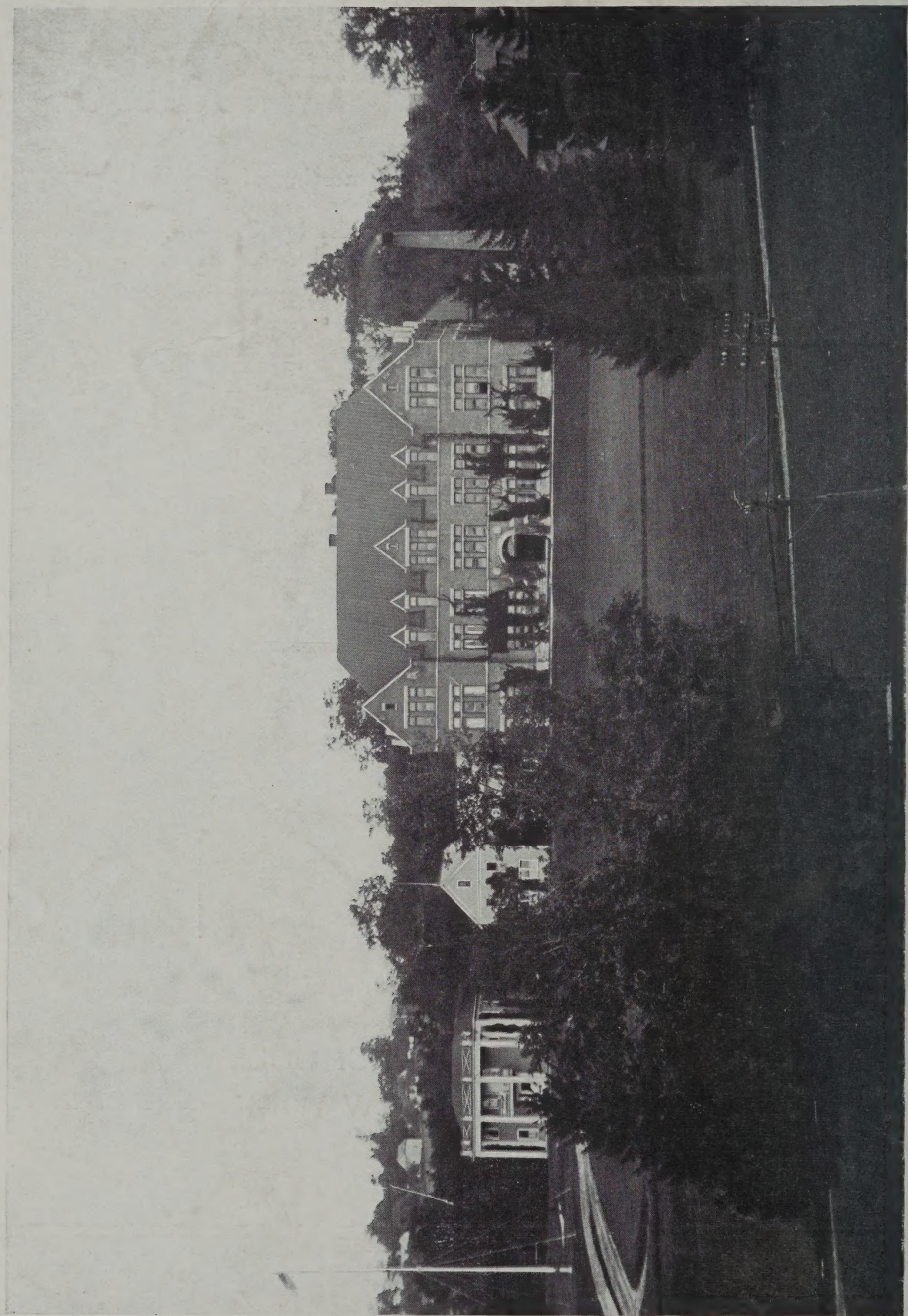
1915 The Ideal Military School

Being a paper read at the annual meeting of the Association of Military Colleges and Schools of the United States, at Washington, D. C., December 3, 1915, by William Verbeck, of Saint John's School, Manlius, N. Y.

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THE MANLIUS SCHOOLS  
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UPPER SCHOOL, THE MANLIUS SCHOOLS (SAINT JOHN'S), MANLIUS, N. Y.



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# The Ideal Military School

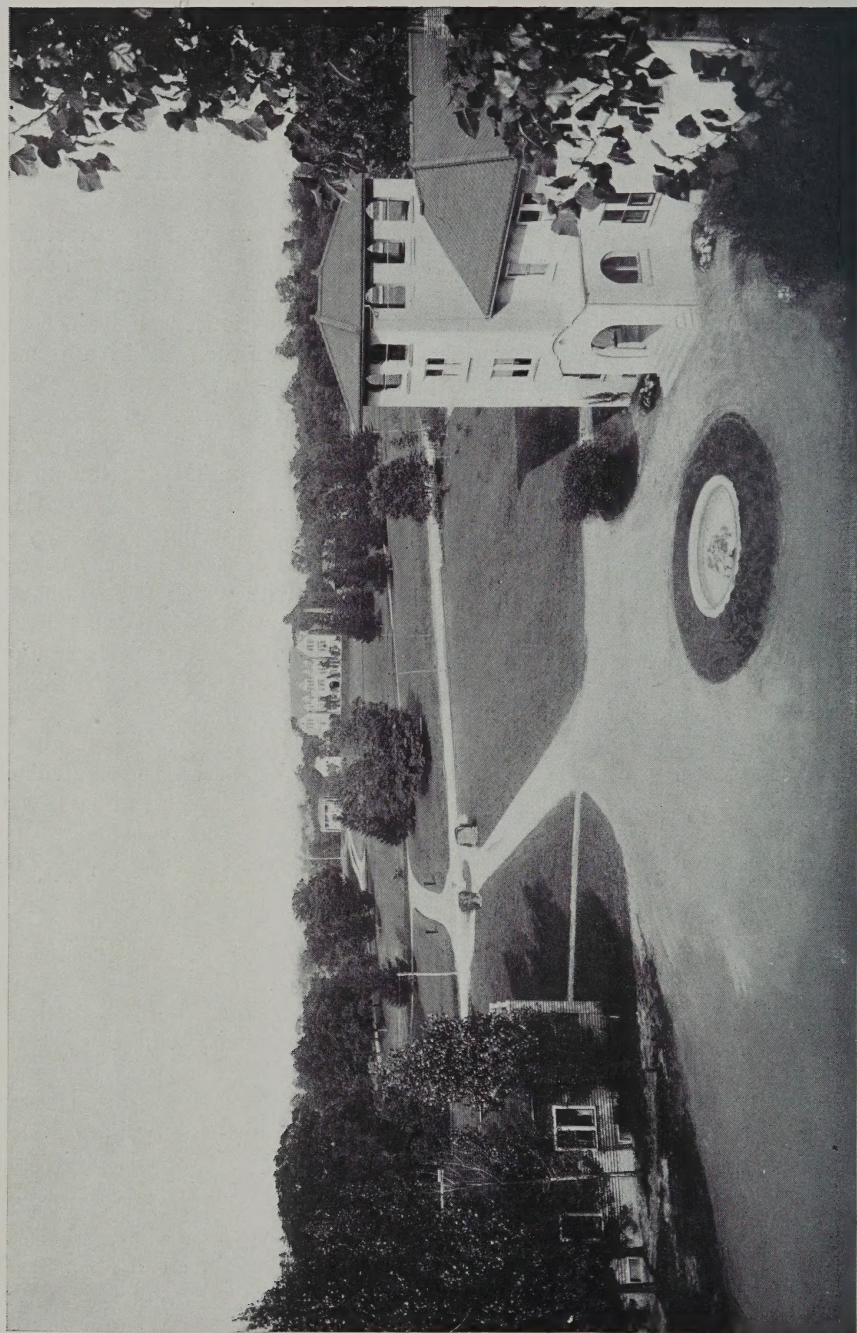
**P**RESUPPOSE the existence of a high grade preparatory school with its ample grounds, comfortable buildings and complete material equipment, in a healthful environment, free from external temptations and distractions, with a corps of masters, loyal, conscientious, well trained and energetic, accustomed to team work, whose interest in the school is unselfish.

Superpose on this establishment, an ideal military regime, and we have the paradox of the reduction of the problems of a school by apparently adding to them. As the addition of salt to an already full glass of water does not cause it to over-flow, so the addition of a military regime to the apparently full schedule of a preparatory school will not perceptibly overload the system. As oil lubricates the cogs of intricate machinery, dignity of military procedure smooths down the workings of school life. Indeed, because of the saving of time in the promptness with which formations are made, and the rapidity with which classes are changed, there is actual time saved in the end. The application of the military principle to recreation, athletics and drill has an influence on every moment of study and recitation period. As a result, a boy studies with greater concentration and application; he has better control of his nerve and determination; and he always possesses balance and poise. In his recitations he shows self-confidence. He stands and sits erect, he speaks clearly and to the point, and answers questions with the courteous military "sir" at the end. He does not "answer back" to his teachers. He stands in the presence of his superiors and salutes punctiliously. Politeness becomes a second nature and thoughtfulness of others, a habit.

Then the first requisite of the ideal military school must be that its processes must be simpler, the running of its machinery smoother, its discipline quieter and more dignified because of the infusion of military methods. Many military schools fail in that they impose a noisy and complicated system, laborious, elaborate and pompous. Such a military system must necessarily fall of its own weight. The military system is a good servant, but a bad master. It is vastly important, therefore, that the military system of a school be installed and superintended by the professional soldier and not by laymen and amateurs. The system must be adapted to the school, and not the school to the system; it must have due regard to the traditions of the school and must grow with it and into the school life.

The ideal military school must have some age. It cannot at once attain to the dignity which only time can give. Like old friends and old





THE CAMPUS, SAINT JOHN'S SCHOOL, (THE MANLIUS SCHOOLS), MANLIUS, N. Y.

wine, there must be testing, tempering and maturing. There must elapse some time for the traditions to grow. There must be some history and much "esprit de corps," and there must be above all things, old boys, those conservators of traditions and guardians of the morals and manners of plebes, rats, gups, that is, new boys, by whatever name tradition has dubbed them. The careful Headmaster must here have his hands hard on the throttle, lest the old boys exceed their prerogatives in venting their traditional sovereign rights on the new boys. In the ideal school, the old boys must be made to know exactly how far they may exercise their handed-down authority in checking the freshness of the new boy without treading on the dangerous ground which leads to fagging, hazing and bullying. The wise Head of the ideal school should harness and direct this traditional authority of the old boys, making it useful as the foundation upon which to build a wise and sane system of student government and control. He should explain to the school that in this democratic Country, the student body of most schools will resent orders emanating from themselves, nor will they be apt to take directions from each other. It is different in England where in their Public Schools, through long tradition, the sixth formers have acted as monitors and prefects and have exercised powers of discipline over under class men little short of the powers of the masters themselves. Fifth and fourth formers have authority in diminishing degree.

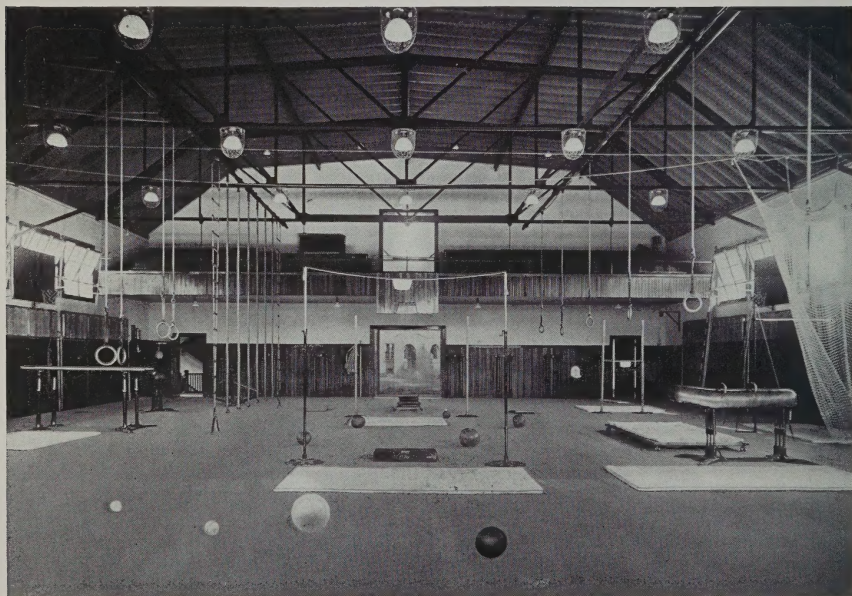
The Head may well ask his boys to substitute student control in the place of the dangerous and senseless practice of hazing and fagging, the measure of authority delegated to the cadets depending upon the length of their sojourn in the school. Thus fourth year men should be eligible to be cadet commissioned officers, third year men, cadet sergeants, second year men, cadet corporals. They must be made to understand that the delegation of authority and power to control others is in no way contrary to the spirit of democratic principles in this country; their attention called to the distinctions of rank and the gradations of power and authority conferred by the Constitution on the officers of the United States Army and Navy. They must be made to feel that the exercise of proper command and authority makes their military life more real and gives character to rank. Thus the delegation of authority to the best and oldest cadets defeats tendency to wanton unlawful exercise of old boy tyranny, resulting in positive benefit to the student body and in vast assistance to the officers and faculty.

The establishment of student control through cadet officers and non-commissioned officers tends to give real character to the military regime. The cadet officers, instead of being mere mouth pieces on drill and on mechanical maneuvers, soon learn to exercise real judgment, responsibility and initiative. They are placed in a position to be examples before their fellows. They become more mature and bear themselves with greater dignity. A new level for the average cadet is established and the mediocre has to follow a stiffer pace. The installing of student government in a school acts





DODGE GYMNASIUM, SAINT JOHN'S SCHOOL,  
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GYMNASIUM INTERIOR

very much as co-operation and profit sharing does in commercial life. The view point of the student on questions of right and wrong is higher. The value of the education which a commissioned or non-commissioned officer receives is greatly enhanced and he makes a better business man, through the exercise of real command, and a better soldier should he be called upon to serve his Country. The authority back of the chevron makes it worth while to receive it. The members of the Faculty are relieved of much of the routine drudgery and in consequence return fresher to their class room work.

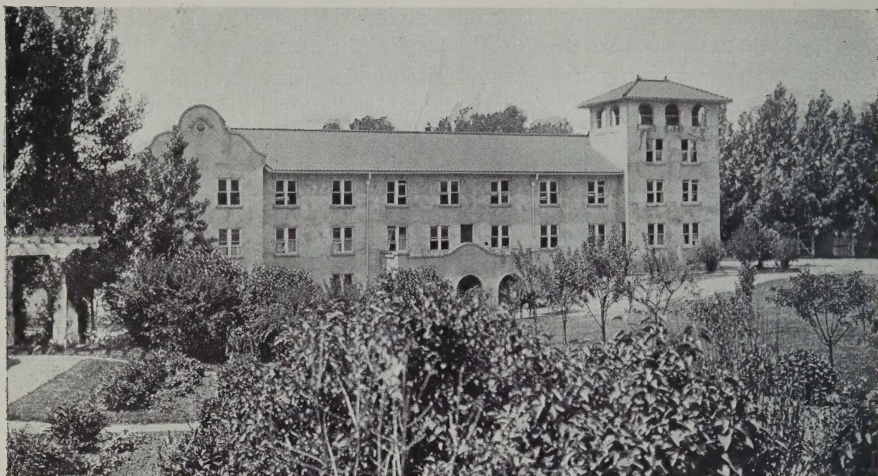
Student government does not only contemplate the availability of well trained and disciplined commissioned and non-commissioned officers, but also the acquiescence and approval of the whole student body in all measures making for good and healthy government.

Asking the cadets to co-operate with the officers and masters, in the administration of the school discipline inculcates public spirit and makes them feel that the school is their own. Through this system the students are made to feel responsibility for the wrong doer and they are expected to assist in bringing him to justice. The culprit in his turn feels that not only has he broken a school rule, but he has also offended and affronted his comrades and the school at large.

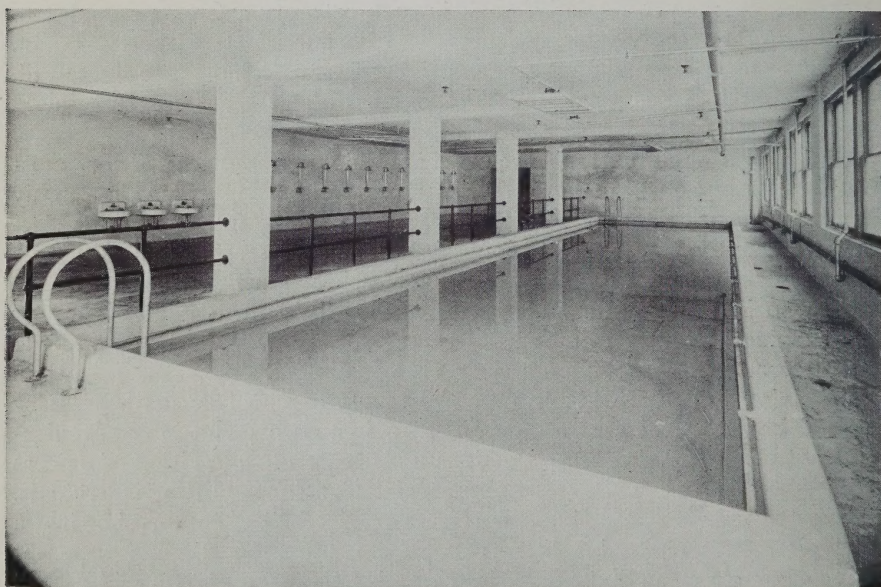
In the ideal school this healthy co-operation of the Faculty and cadets will result in minimizing punishment and as in the case of our school, all formal punishments may be abolished entirely. We depend for discipline almost altogether on the grading of students by character, conduct, punctuality and neatness so that relative rank in each category acts as a stimulus to good endeavor. Individual efficiency records spur cadets to best conduct. According to the rank and grade, privileges and honors are bestowed. Admonition, reprimand and the deprivation of privileges are substituted for arbitrary punishment.

In the ideal military school the cadets are highly organized. There must be athletic teams, musical clubs and literary societies, each group thoroughly organized. Much attention should be given to the careful selection or election of cadets to these various groups. It should be seen to that all cadets are attached to some group representing a school activity. Even the left overs, who because of unpopularity or mediocrity can make no society or club, should be organized into some reading society, walking team, or if no better reason can be found for their organization, let them form, say, an eating club. Still more highly organized must a school be in its military units. There must be a great deal of "esprit de corps" and inter-organization emulation. All these organizations under careful supervision of officers and members of the Faculty, become powerful agents for uplifting individuals. Thus a boy may be disciplined by his own foot ball team for showing a yellow streak; and by his literary society for casting discredit upon it through low class standing; if he is sloppy his company officers will use all





VERBECK HALL, THE MANLIUS SCHOOLS, MANLIUS, N. Y.



SWIMMING POOL, GYMNASIUM, THE MANLIUS SCHOOLS, MANLIUS, N. Y.



their authority to straighten him out and give him a new direction. So student government is greatly aided by the cross fire effect of the elaborately organized school. These varied organizations representing multifarious school activities have the double effect of not only being aids to discipline but add to the happiness and contentment of cadets.

An ideal school should not admit any into its membership unless they be at the very least normal and average. No malicious, bad or dishonest boy should be permitted to enter the school, but, perchance if any such have found lodgment in the busy whirl of the school, through its very centrifugal force he should be automatically thrown out by the public sentiment of the student body.

A normal boy, being dropped into the vortex of life of the ideal military school, should automatically move in the general direction of the crowd and should find it difficult to move against the stream. The invisible walls of discipline should keep him in the right direction. He will then develop courage, cultivate self confidence and initiative, enjoy school life and by induction feel the influence of the school traditions, and move to steady improvement.

The conditions of the school should be so morally healthful that it would work to stimulate him to be good even if it was for no higher reason than that it was good policy, or because it was the fashion in the school or that it was the easiest way. Higher motives will surely follow as of by second nature.

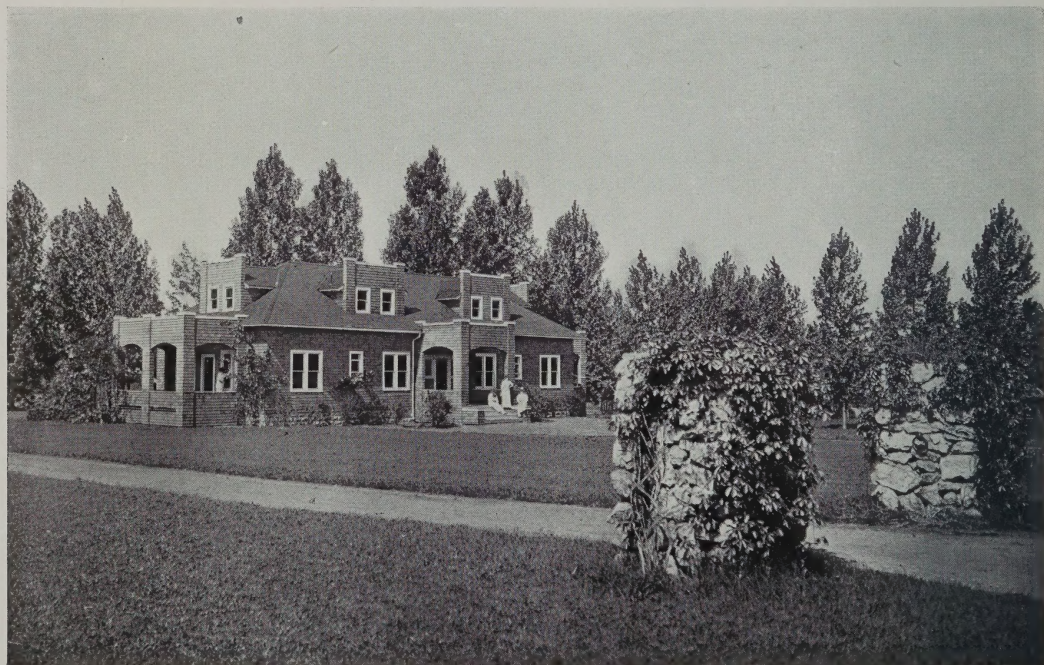
Only the conviction on the part of the boys that the Faculty are sincere and just to them in all their dealings can maintain the high state of the morale in the corps. Only the most honorable treatment will place the cadets on such a high plane of honor as to make self government possible. Ideal conditions cannot be attained except by the most thorough organization and co-ordination of both the teacher and pupil. The Faculty must be a unit in setting the example of the highest type of right living. The system of student government, honor and activities must hang suspended from strong Faculty support. By indefatigable attention to detail, a school can be kept to its ideals. Boys are prone to grow weary of well doing and they must be prodded and encouraged to keep the lines taut and the strings tuned up. The high moral standing of the ideal military school may be measured by the character of the Faculty and the completeness of the machinery necessary to accomplish its mission and aim. Character-building teachers make characterful boys. The military schools which have best succeeded in grafting a methodical and businesslike character-building military system to the processes of the civilian school, have depended on the simplicity of the combination and the strength of the directors.

The aim of the ideal military school should be to teach the boy to teach himself. It should encourage self help. It should teach a boy firmly to resolve. And it should teach him to carry out that resolution with help





THE C. F. KING CLUB, SAINT JOHN'S SCHOOL, (THE MANLIUS SCHOOLS), MANLIUS, N. Y.



THE CHAFEE HOSPITAL, THE MANLIUS SCHOOLS



first, if he needs it, then single handed. Responsibility and initiative should go hand in hand.

The highest awards should be to those who initiate good movements and activities in this school. The leader should be rewarded. The inventor and thinker must be advanced.

Without this sense of responsibility and without initiative, the best drilled and uniformed cadet must be made to feel he is a mere machine. The environments and traditions must make a cadet feel that he is at his best when he studies because he earnestly desires to, and that he does right because he believes firmly that it is right and that it is his duty to do right. The model cadet is the one who has the power of concentration and application, without the necessity of coercion, who believes in the rights of others and who does not believe in taking a greater share of rights than others, who is considerate of his teachers and comrades and who is thoroughly honest in performing the responsibilities placed upon him. Such a boy is the responsible, trustworthy type, that goes to make up the best in a school and the more the cadet corps can approximate the perfection of this ideal boy, the more nearly ideal is the school.

The life of the ideal military school must be a cheerful, optimistic one, on the theory that the happier the cadet, the harder he works and the better soldier he is. The members of the Faculty must assist the Head in entertaining the cadets. They are read to on Sunday nights. Group walks are taken over the hills on Sunday afternoons, moving pictures on Saturday nights, boxing matches, dramatics, glee clubs, athletics, all must brighten the school life, so as to freshen the cadet for the long school days and the tedious evening study hours. The local color which every boy expects in a good military school, gives a tinge of romance and interest to what otherwise would be an uninteresting and dry life.

Uniforms should be scrupulously neat and worn well buttoned up and in a soldierly manner. Hats should not be scribbled over like autograph albums, and worn rakishly on the side. Flannel shirts should not be worn with the sleeves slouchily rolled up to the elbows. The wearing of a uniform tends to discourage the petty vanities which might be born from the wearing of jewelry or luxurious dress. Uniform clothing tends to uniform neatness, and neatness leads to cleanliness, which is the natural road to health. A boy who takes a pride in being neat in appearance, takes a pride in throwing back his head and breathing deep from his diaphragm. Neatness is next to soldierliness.

The installation of a partial military life would be harder in the long run because it would be military in fits and starts or only superficially military. It would not be thorough, therefore it would necessarily be labored. It would be playing at it and not the natural, usual life, therefore ineffective. Such a pseudo military school would be compelled of necessity to give more time to drill than the ideal military school and with all its drill.



TROOP "A", SAINT JOHN'S SCHOOL, (THE MANLIUS SCHOOLS), MANLIUS, N. Y.



could not make a good showing at an inspection, stage it though they may, ever so carefully, as the ideal school that lives a complete military life. The astute inspector can well discover the attempt to put over a performance. For this reason, I believe in two Annual Government inspections, one of which is made on an unexpected date, so that the real conditions of military routine and life would be properly discovered.

Some time ago, the popularity of the military idea tempted civilian teachers and headmasters to attempt the combination, but as military science has broadened, and the requirements have demanded trained military men to direct and supervise such combinations, there has been a gradual extermination of these ephemeral military schools where military life was merely imitated and perfunctory, and also those other schools which catered to unmanageable boys, prostituting military principles to purely disciplinary purposes. These schools of a few years ago, happily, do not now exist. The strong and well known military schools of today have the one aim and purpose of adding high character to brains, and strength to both by contributing to the building of strong bodies. This is why the well trained habitual soldier albeit but a preparatory school graduate is a uniformly greater asset to the Country than the graduate of a college where his military training has been hardly more than of the drill ground and lecture room.

The necessity for punishment is reduced to a minimum in the ideal military school. It is not 'til the voice ceases to be obeyed that we turn to severer terms. Punishments tending to shame are seldom used because they are unequal and affect different natures differently. It is a military principle in discipline not to weaken self respect of the offender, so we seldom correct a corporal before his squad, a captain before his company, or a teacher before his class, as we not only offend deeply, but defeat the purposes of discipline by often destroying the future usefulness of the offender. In the ideal military school cadets are not humiliated before the eyes of others. Fools caps and standing in the corners are, happily, extinct in schools. In the ideal military school, sarcasm, irony or ridicule are not resorted to. Exhibitions of bursts of temper and anger do not occur. Here the military methods of command and admonition are firm, strong and dignified. The military reprimand has plenty of unspent reserve about it that carries conviction and fear with it, but it has no sputter here. Tasks that do not fit the offense are not used in the ideal school. Correction must be tempered with reason. "Because you have disobeyed me, you shall have a longer lesson" is unreasonable and is liable to make a cadet dread study.

A sloppy cadet on leaving school asked the Commandant's permission to buy his rifle and bayonet. The Commandant, surprised at what seemed to be an exhibition of sentiment, asked the sloppy cadet for what reason he desired to take the gun home. The sloppy cadet answered, "When I get home I'll go to the back window and throw out the gun, bayonet first, into the dust heap, and every morning I'll go to the window, shake my fist at it

and say, 'rust, confound you, rust'!" This was all the good that came of the many hours he spent cleaning the gun and walking punishment with it. In this school, the blame is not too general and covers only the specific offense. Each act is treated separately. Neither is a whole class or company given punishment for the few. Above all, here condign punishment is the most effective. King Solomon said, "Because sentence against an evil is not executed speedily, therefore the hearts of the sons of men are fully set in them to do evil."

In the ideal military school, of course, there is no corporal punishment, nor is a cadet man-handled or pushed or shoved, nor is his chin jammed back, nor are his ears pulled. It is almost absurd to suppose that any of these archaic practices still exist, but I am afraid that in a few tin schools some strange practices still obtain. The flat side of the sword has been known to be used in a most undignified and unmilitary manner to speed up a laggard. It is only too great a pity that the cadet officers in some of our schools are not taught a greater respect for the sword and that when not in use for purposes of ceremony or command, the proper place for the blade is in the sheath and not to be used in slashing at clover tops and daisies, or in jabbing at the ground.

The ideal military school must be profoundly and truly military. Not played at and not in spots. It must be military all day and all week. There must be a military atmosphere about the post. The lessons learned on the drill ground should be carried faithfully into every duty of school life. Every formation should be a setting up exercise, and every class section a squad drill. Every exchange of courtesies between cadets and instructors should be a lesson in military etiquette. Every ceremony should be a drill in precision.

In the ideal military school much less time is spent on mere drill than the public understands. Times have changed, and it has become more important to train a soldier in initiative, self-confidence and ability to do well all that his hands find to do; hence the training of a cadet today is largely along the lines of all around handiness. To take care of himself and to keep all the rules of hygiene is more important than tactics, and neatness of his surroundings and punctiliousness to duty more important than precision in the manual of arms.

The ideal military school is committed to the proposition that to take care of little things is to accomplish great things. It is consecrated to the principle that he must take care of the minutes for the hours will take care of themselves, and that the best way to save dollars is to save cents. For the lack of a horseshoe nail a battle might be lost.

From the sounding of reveille to the last note of taps, the routine of the day is punctuated with the thought that the quicker you get there the sooner is the task performed. Everything in the system seems to advise to "Do it now." It says: "Don't put it off; do it altogether; do it with your

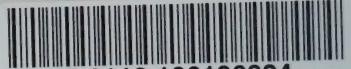


whole soul." The rewards are found in longer recreations, ease of conscience, and the promotion which is in store for the one who has done his duty on time and without noise. A cadet, in order to be fit, must be strong to meet any emergency. He must have presence of mind, quick wit and steady nerves; therefore the body must be built up through drills and setting up exercises. He must be kept in perfect physical condition through care of the body and attention to diet.

A cadet here must cultivate repose and balance. He must be courteous. Chivalry, as handed down from the days of knighthood teaches the lesson that a cadet must be generous to the weak, respectful to his seniors and polite and courteous to all. To this end the cadet in the ideal military school is governed by an elaborate code of military courtesy, which is part of his regulations. The result of the teaching of respect to superiors and good traditions, is the splendid devotion and patriotism for their Country which they learn from the rising of the sun, when the flag is raised with due ceremony, until the sunset gun, when the flag is lowered to the strains of the "Star Spangled Banner."

Above all, however, building of character is the paramount purpose of the ideal military school. It aims to give depth and breadth to the all-around boy. It aims to give him purpose and energy, and all incidents in the school life tend to the building up of noble character. Therefore the discipline must depend upon principles of honor and truth. Equivocation and subterfuge cannot find a place in the system. Nagging and scolding undermine the military school. The highest type of military school then, must be honest and dignified if it is to leave a life impression upon its cadets.

An ideal military school has most nearly performed its functions when it has taught a cadet to give thought to the comfort and happiness of others, to be orderly and methodical in procedure in all things, punctual and prompt in his appointments and cleancut and neat in his appearance; when he has been taught to govern his temper and his tongue, and developed in him the soldierly qualities of nerve and masterfulness, when he is made true as a square; when he can give a command that will be obeyed; when he can organize a company and lead it; when he can answer the call of his Country and say, "Here am I."



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